

NSC BRIEFING

15 October 1957

NORTH AFRICAN PROBLEMS

- I. The continuing Algerian rebellion remains the issue about which all major North African problems revolve.
 - A. Tempo of rebellion appears--as claimed by French officials--to be substantially slower than during December-January peak. Nevertheless, constant recruitment appears to maintain strength of rebel "professionals" at 20,000 to 30,000 men while training, equipment and logistical support are all improved over a year ago. There is some indication rebels may be girding for sensational offensive to coincide with UN debate next month.
 - B. [redacted] despite vigorous efforts by [redacted] 25X1
French to seal Algerian borders, rebels still obtain substantial supplies [redacted] from external 25X1
sources.
 1. This due to widespread procurement facilities of Egyptians and transit facilities afforded by Libya, Tunisia and Morocco. Most important channel appears to be overland route westward from Egypt through Libya--where Kubaar government now increasingly cooperative.
 2. Main arms sources are Egypt and Western Europe. Some Czech material reportedly identified. An apparently unsuccessful attempt was made this summer to deliver a major shipment of Czech arms [redacted] 25X1

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

3. Soviet arms are not known to have reached rebels yet,

4.

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It is believed that nothing larger than relatively small mortars and bazookas have been received.

C. French military strength remains constant at 400,000 men.

II. Most immediate Tunisian problem: Paris' refusal to supply promised arms for small, ill-equipped security forces and intercession with NATO allies to prevent sales to Tunisia.

A. Long-standing situation became acute with 1 September clash of French army unit based in Algeria with Tunisian border guard. Subsequently, Tunis on 4 September requested "urgent assistance of US in procuring small arms for internal defense.

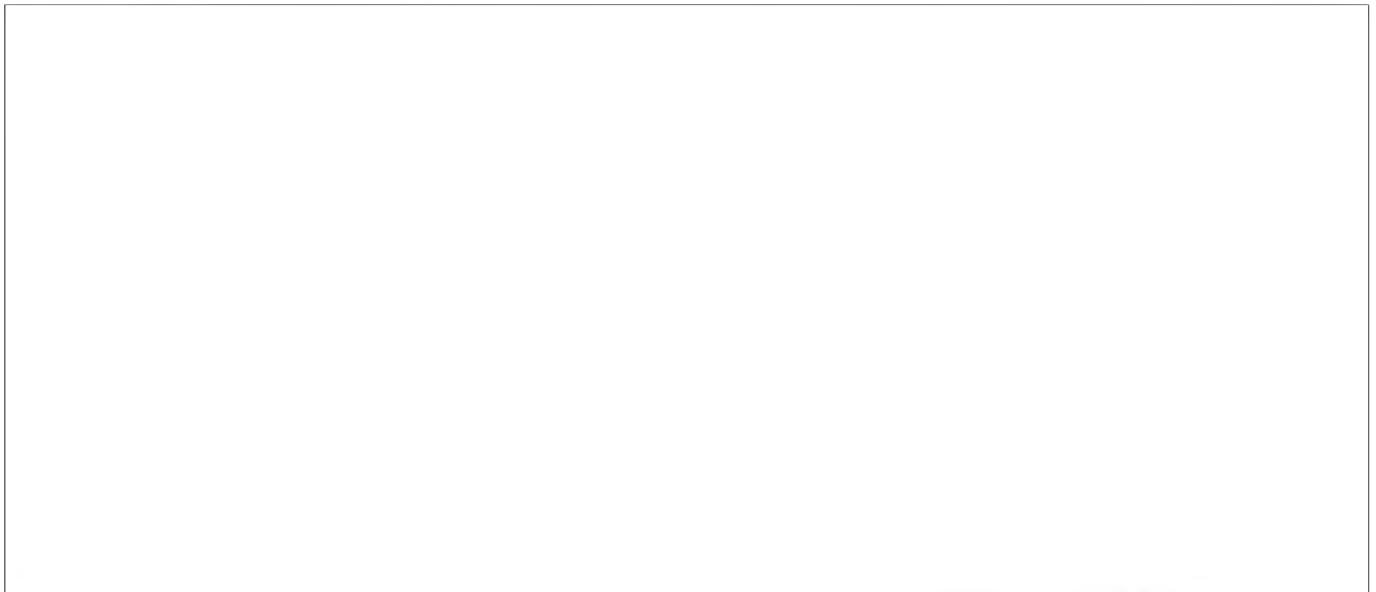
1. Thereafter, some 13 violations of Tunisian territory by French army and air force has contributed to acute popular tension.

2. Well disciplined popular demonstrations 4 October permitted some popular steam to escape, but situation remains explosive

B. Paris--which considers Bourguiba's support for Algerian rebels too blatant--sees no sense of urgency; may still hope by withholding arms force Bourguiba to cut down aid to Algeria; caretaker government refuses to allow arms shipments.

1. Italy--most logical arms source--ready to sell, but unwilling to risk complications in relations with France.

2. Spain--in line with new policy of closer collaboration with France on North African issues--also playing along with Paris.
3. President Bourguiba has assured Tunisians he has commitment from US that he would get arms this month.



III. Morocco: No border clashes similar to Tunisian and Libyan incidents. French well aware of aid to rebels and fact that Moroccan King-- on 20 August 1957 for first time declared full support for Algerian independence. Paris, however, considers Moroccan aid to Algerians more "discreet" than Tunisian.

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- A. Moroccan-French relations have improved somewhat since Moroccan ambassador was recalled a year ago. Nevertheless, relations are disturbed on many issues.
- B. King and most Istiqlal leaders are cool toward Egyptian overtures; yet 72 Egyptian teachers--51 more than last year--will have considerable impact on Moroccan youth.
 1. Egyptian school--attended by some 200 Moroccans--held in building evacuated early this year by US 17th Air Division headquarters at insistence Moroccan government.

C. Moroccans closely observing Tunisian arms situation; if Bourguiba succeeds in breaking away from French supply monopoly, Morocco likely to try same tactics. Has already indicated desire for American military assistance.

IV. Libya: Recent events appear to foreshadow future difficulties in Libya's relations with the West.

A. Preliminary approach made on 21 September for renegotiation of American base rights, using alleged Soviet offer of assistance as a lever.

B. French attack on 3 October stirred anti-Western feeling.

1. Libyan government requested British military assistance following French attack on Algerian rebels taking refuge across the Libyan border.

2. Public demonstrations in Benghazi on 6 October demanded reassessment of Libyan agreements with France, Britain, and the US.

3. French now report Franco-Libyan consideration of border commission to prevent recurrence.

C. Egyptian effort to exploit Libyan avarice and fear continues.

1. Six armored cars and quantity of light weapons presented to Libyan royal guard on 14 October, accompanied by a small Egyptian training mission.

2. Egyptian cooperation with Soviet mission in Libya continues, and pro-Egyptian elements exist in government at all levels.

V. UN debate on Algerian issue carried largely by Tunisia and Morocco on behalf of rebels--not likely until late November.

- A. Algerian gambit of proposing negotiations between France, Morocco, Tunisia, and Algerian representatives to solve Algerian problem within a "North African" context is bid for maximum support in UN.
- B. Present indications are that demand for "right to independence" will be soft pedalled, but independence is still goal.

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